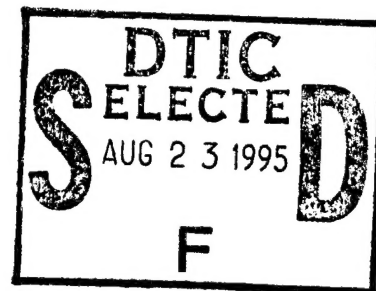


NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

Newport, R.I.



OPERATIONS ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF CONFLICT-WHAT SUFFERS?

By

A. J. Karle Jr.

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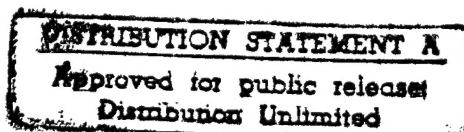
A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: *A. J. Karle Jr.*

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ABSTRACT

The strategic setting has changed in the recent past, and with the change U.S. forces find themselves more involved with MOOTW. Despite this increased involvement with MOOTW, force training, structure and equipment are still focused at the war end of the spectrum of conflict. The paper takes a look at why our forces train almost totally for wartime tasks, structure for war and to a lesser degree why doctrine lags, despite MOOTW. Recommendations are then offered that point CINCs and forces towards a more specialized and focused approach to either the MOOTW or war side of the spectrum. The conclusion arrived at is that it is time to study and make appropriate changes to insure improved readiness and capabilities across the spectrum of conflict.

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Since the end of the Cold War, Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) have come to the fore front of discussion and debate amongst many military officers. There are numerous reasons for this debate. One of the primary reasons is the threat. The post-Cold War era presents a different set of threats to our security.¹ One need only read the daily news or scan CNN to realize that gone is (at least temporarily) the horrid threat of the former Soviet Union and its massive formations of tanks and artillery, not to mention the destructive potential of their nuclear arsenal.

In the place of this Cold War threat, there now appears ethnic strife, civil wars, famines and tribal disputes. These situations are not militarily comparable to the old Soviet threat, but they manage to attract the attention and involvement of our political leaders, citizens and Nation. These less threatening situations are also present within our borders in the form of terrorism, natural disasters and drug related problems.

In view of this reduced threat, the Nation has downsized its military. An unresolved problem remains. While threat size and scope have diminished, there are no indications that our political leaders attitude regarding our desires to remain engaged in the world's efforts towards peace and prosperity have significantly lessened. It is apparent that not only abroad, but also within our own borders, the expanding challenges of MOOTW will continue to

fall squarely on the shoulders of the Regional Commanders in Chief(CINC). This is one dilemma that warfighting CINCs must deal with. How do I deal with greater numbers of MOOTW, missions of a more complex and equally uncertain nature, in view of shrinking forces and smaller budgets?

An additional dilemma for operational level commanders involves that of focussing on his primary responsibility. A survey of the on-going operations of our CINCs plainly demonstrates that MOOTW are "what's happening." These operations are not the primary responsibility of the military. Being ready to fight and win the Nation's wars remains our foremost responsibility and the prime consideration governing all our military activities.² These last two statements are anything but complimentary, supportive, or any other word that would display compatibility. While some similarities can be drawn between war and MOOTW regarding the use of units, equipment, training, etc., fighting wars and conducting disaster relief or peacekeeping operations are not compatible.

The National military chain of command clearly shows that the first military personality in it, and the individual who must deal with these dilemmas is the Regional CINC. When first thinking of this situation, it is very easy to come to the conclusion that CINCs should speak out against being told that his "foremost responsibility" is to fight and win wars, yet the most prominent of his duties lies in executing missions in the area of MOOTW. Viewing

the strategic environment will quickly awaken one to the realization that opportunities for MOOTW are everywhere (not forgetting the possibilities for Major Regional Conflicts (MRC)). Additionally, it is not part of the make up of military men to either say no to or strongly imply their displeasure with missions that do not directly involve combat to fight and win wars. The solution to this dilemma lies in the Warfighting CINCs' initiatives and actions to ensure that while his forces may be totally involved in MOOTW, both experience and time wise, they are prepared to fight and win the Nation's wars. In addition to winning wars, the CINCs must also ensure that his forces are prepared to conduct these complex and often times very politically sensitive MOOTW.

This essay argues that now is the time for Regional CINCs to take action towards the designation and specialization of forces and assets for the conduct of MOOTW or wartime missions. The essay provides a discussion on areas of key concern regarding our current direction. It then goes on to offer recommendations that will resolve these concerns. Finally, it offers an answer to the question; Can our CINCs continue to plan, train and operate across the spectrum of conflict without something suffering?

Training of forces for both war and MOOTW is a dilemma and situation that requires resolution. One former Battalion Commander stated, "Very little of my training time is spent on areas not directly related to things of a combat

nature. We worked on training for non-combatant evacuations (NEO) and raid training which are considered MOOTW, only because these are things we are expected to know. Training for peace operations, humanitarian assistance and things of this nature were not on the schedule." When asked if the Regiment or Division did training in MOOTW he gave the same type of response, "They did a minor amount of work with NEO's, but most training revolved around combined arms operations and amphibious operations."³ The results of interviews with other officers who have held battalion level commands, and/or have had experience as operations officers at the battalion level and above expressed similar views, that is, training for war is predominant. Why does this occur, and what is wrong with this approach?

One reason for concentrating training on war level skills has been addressed earlier in this paper. As is the case with the National Military Strategy's statement regarding the fact that the armed forces "foremost responsibility" is fighting and winning wars, so goes the attitude of those responsible for training the armed forces. The above mentioned interviews point out this fact. The same attitude prevails at higher joint levels. Ocean Venture 92 and Tandem Thrust 92--conducted off the Carolina coast and in California and the mid-Pacific respectively--saw thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines training together on joint wartime tasks.⁴ It is safe to assume that the 1994 series of these joint exercises also

concentrated on joint wartime tasks. This situation is occurring because of the priority set at the top of the chain.

Another problem exists with training for MOOTW. Other than a couple of the possible missions associated with MOOTW, such as raids and counterinsurgency operations, they do not generate the same level of excitement and enthusiasm that is generated by wartime training. Training for MOOTW is not sexy and hi-speed, regardless of organizational level.

A command post exercise was conducted in February 1994, the subject of which was the defense of the Northern Flank of NATO.⁵ Part of the way through the exercise a major civilian refugee problem was placed in the play of the exercise. The refugee problem was all but ignored. Why? The joint force commander and staff were too busy practicing their wartime operational art and could not be bothered with such non-warrior type scenarios. Refugees are not fun to deal with. Will we fight as we train?

There is a common belief that if you train forces (all levels to include the joint force commander's staff) in wartime tasks, then those organizations will be ready for anything. This statement used to be believed by the author. A large portion of military officers still do believe it. While in some instances this belief had to be extracted by direct questioning during interviews, there were a number of cases where this statement was given without solicitation.

As the CINCs and joint force commanders look to the future, the mindset that training for the big one will handle the other stuff as well needs changing.

It would probably be sufficient to leave this point and move on. In fairness to the training issue, an opinion in opposition to the belief that training for war will not satisfy training for MOOTW is offered. Lieutenant Colonel John R. Allen, in writing on his battalion's experiences at Guantanamo Bay and the Refugee Operations states,

"In retrospect, the single lesson of MOOTW is if a Marine unit is trained and ready for war- not low intensity (LIC), not MOOTW, but war- it will succeed at virtually any mission assigned, regardless of how murky it may seem under mission analysis. Having now commanded a battalion on two significantly different humanitarian contingency missions, I am more convinced than ever that success will flow from well-trained squads, squad leaders and junior officers."⁶

This mindset is somewhat troubling, particularly in light of the rather benign environment in which the Guantanamo Operation took place. The other "significantly different humanitarian contingency" that LtCol Allen addresses was shipboard security in the Caribbean. One must question, that if this significant other operation had been in Somalia during UNOSOM II or in Bosnia, would LtCol Allen have still drawn the same conclusions and lesson learned. Attempts to reduce war or MOOTW training to a "single

lesson" is dangerous. There are too many possible missions, situations and factors involved in these operations to conclude training for war is the answer. It is only part of the answer. CINCs must know how their forces are thinking and training, and use their power to fix these problems (if they believe there are problems).

The next major question or dilemma facing the Regional CINCs and joint force commanders is that of forces and their structure. This major topic breaks down into a number of questions that require careful thought and some innovative thinking to ensure nothing suffers when called upon to operate at either end of the spectrum of conflict. This section will dwell, to some degree, on Marine forces due to their expeditionary nature and the fact that they have participated in a very large percentage of the MOOTW, as well as war. The CINCs and joint force commanders must ensure that they have forces that are "ready, relevant and capable."

Since the end of the Cold War, and with it the increased number of MOOTW, the components and their contributed forces have changed little, with the exception being in numbers. In particular, Marine forces (smallest reductions) are virtually the same. Changes that have occurred lie primarily in the realm of a smaller number of infantry battalions, aircraft squadrons, tanks per battalion and other such number reductions. The Marine Corps Reserve

has not changed at all. Structure and numbers are basically the same.

What is being done to attempt to provide a force that is more in tune with the increasing frequency and complexity of MOOTW? Not to pick on LtCol Allen, but it is safe to say that the same attitude prevails regarding force structure and packaging that prevails with training, i.e., being ready for war makes you ready for MOOTW.

One way the Marine Corps thinks it is "skinning this cat" is through task organization. Task organization of a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) has been the Marine Corps' answer to successful mission accomplishment over the past 50 years. It has worked and can continue to work if closer attention is paid to the things that Marines, as part of a joint force, can most likely be expected to do in the future, i.e., crisis response to a MOOTW. This statement leads to a question that may cause a Marine to be boiled in oil for asking, namely-Should the Marine Corps be the Nations' designated forces for MOOTW, only? To follow on with this line of thinking-Should the Marine Corps be restructured or packaged in order to be put in the proper mindset, and be more focused on MOOTW, while at the same time freeing the Army and Air Force to focus on the conduct of war. This is not a totally original idea. In 1952 legislators articulated a similar concept when they stated,

"the purpose of the Marine Corps.....is to provide a balanced force in readiness for a naval campaign.....and to suppress or contain international disturbances short of large scale war.....such a force would better enable the Army and Air Force to concentrate on their major responsibility of preparing for all-out war."7

In a similar view, General Mundy, Commandant of the Marine Corps when writing on the Marines mission in Somalia commented,

"For Marines, this mission is not new. Ships and Marines have been involved in humanitarian intervention since the inception of American naval power. The Marine Corps' historic role as the nations expeditionary force in readiness has dictated this role for the Corps." 8

While this comment was not, in and of itself, made to advocate the elimination of wartime tasks for the Marine Corps, it accurately states what has happened in the past, what is happening now and begs the question-Should MOOTW be the Marine Corps' focus for training, structuring and equipping?

The idea of focusing roles and functions in such a narrow fashion is no doubt detestable to many. Having said this however, look at the way in which the services are currently squabbling over roles and functions. They are all attempting to ensure they can get a piece of the action when it occurs, and most frequently and probably it is MOOTW that occurs. Conversely, no service wants to be left at home

when the all-out war happens. With shrinking budgets and an apparently increasing demand for forces to do MOOTW, is it time to restructure based on a sharper, more clearly defined set of roles and functions? The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Report on Roles, Missions, and Functions gives an indication that this narrowing of roles and functions is being considered. In discussing the future for the U.S. Atlantic Command (now USACOM) the report addresses consolidation of CONUS based forces in order to respond rapidly to crisis situations. Specifically it states,

"This CINC could also be assigned certain other functional responsibilities, including:

- Undertaking principal responsibility for support to United Nations peacekeeping operations and training units for that purpose.

- Assisting with the response to natural disasters in the United States and other requirements for military support to civil authorities, when requested by State Governors and as directed by the President."⁹

While some of these initiatives are being implemented, more narrowing should be investigated. Placing one Regional CINC in a position that makes him responsible for these types of MOOTW is a step in the right direction, but does it go far enough? Does it focus roles and functions for his components? More study of this is needed.

Continued emphasis from the CINC downward is the place to start. Recent involvement in Somalia, Haiti and on the periphery in Bosnia are MOOTW and would in some instances also fall into the category of nonstate type wars. Colonel J. R. Barnett writes on nonstate wars and the need for specific command structure. He stated,

"State militaries should devise specific command structures for nonstate warfare. Command structures designed with decisive battle in mind are ill-suited to wars where enemy popular support is the deciding factor."¹⁰

This statement makes sense and should be taken and applied to other forms of MOOTW. Current command structures differ little whether for war or MOOTW. It is time to change our way of thinking at the CINC and JFC level.

A problem that the CINCs and their Joint Force Commanders must deal with is that of Reserve participation in future conflicts. War and the use of the 200K call-up works (for the most part). Large numbers of the kinds of troops needed in MOOTW, i.e., combat service support, civil affairs, heavy engineers, etc. are in the Reserve Component. There is no 200K call-up for MOOTW. Involuntary recall is tough to get accomplished, therefore the JFC relies on his components' ability to get volunteers in order to have the requisite skills needed. Recent MOOTW have shown that two situations can arise. One, you are short in numbers because there are not enough volunteers; and two, there is normally

some kind of a frequent rotation due to the length of time this citizen soldier can devote to the operations. ¹¹

"The reservist only temporarily assumes professional responsibility. His principal functions in society lie elsewhere. ¹²

In order to solve the problem with Reserve participation in these frequently occurring MOOTW, action by the CINCs is required. There is too much needed capability for MOOTW in the Reserve Component to rely on volunteers, especially if a rapid succession of new operations occur.

Development of a more substantial doctrinal base for MOOTW must be pursued. Though beyond the scope of this essay, it is important to point to the increasingly complex nature of these operations. In war, the CINC or JFC is much less concerned with such factors as the social, economic, and diplomatic aspects of the situation than he is in executing MOOTW (this should not be construed to mean he doesn't care at all about these factors in war). As the strategic setting continues to evolve, our doctrine must be revised and totally reshaped (if necessary) to ensure training, forces required, command and control and other support are ready to deal with these situations.

In order to be prepared for the future, the CINCs must actively seek changes to the current direction of our military. The increase in their status and power of persuasion, due to Goldwater-Nichols, gives them the clout

needed to be bold. Discussed below are some recommendations that will allow CINCs, JFCs and components to be more ready and capable to operate across the spectrum of conflict.

-Training can be better focused when the components know what tasks will be expected of them. Delineating training time for war and MOOTW by a particular percentage, without first studying the problem, would be ludicrous. However, it is recommended that well over 50% of a unit's time should be spent in training for either MOOTW or war depending upon the designated focus of the unit.

-Units designated as MOOTW specialist require added training in areas such as the cultural, economic, political background of countries and regions where they will potentially operate. Specific mission training is also required. A train the trainers approach could be used in order to ensure training takes place from the JFC staff through the privates. State Department involvement in this area needs consideration.

-Exercises similar to the one conducted by I Marine Expeditionary Force, Exercise EMERALD EXPRESS¹³ a joint humanitarian assistance exercise, should be conducted as the rule rather than the exception by forces designated as MOOTW specialists.

-Destroy in those who have it, the mindset that if you are trained for war; then you can do anything-particularly those of the field grade level and JFC staff. Somalia is an

example of a bad situation that got worse, due in part to a lack of understanding and respect for a complex situation and the economic, political and cultural realities that existed.

In the realm of the CINCs, JFC and components, the following recommendations are offered regarding functions and structure.

- Assign one CINC to be responsible for MOOTW. Assign additional personnel to his headquarters, to be used to form standing JFC staffs. These staffs will concentrate on specific regions. This allows the MOOTW CINC and his JFCs, and the remaining warfighting CINCs the ability to focus on MOOTW or war, but not to have to do both.

- Assign the Marine Corps and designated Navy forces the role of executing MOOTW. If study of this recommendation indicates numbers are insufficient, assign an Army Division (10th Mountain perhaps) to augment. The vast majority of the Army and Air Force will train for war.

- The United Nations should create its own force. This force should be assigned to missions of a more benign nature (Truce and peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance for example) leaving the more complex missions for the MOOTW CINC. Experienced UN personnel conducting training in the MOOTW CINCs command is necessary.

- Study the current structure of designated MOOTW forces. Do they need tanks or should they have more trucks or APC's. Are there occupational specialties in the Reserve

Component that should be in the Active component? This will be a real "nashing of the teeth" type of study, but it must be accomplished in order to balance the MOOTW and war designated forces.

Doctrinal development was not fully discussed, however there are ideas among our fellow military members. One such idea was offered by Major Neimeyer when he wrote on peace operations,

"Political embarrassment is often much more effective than direct military intervention...Occupying the country may not be as important as the staged political event."¹⁴

He goes on to discuss the advantages that a "bandit" chief has over U.S. Forces, such as surprise and initiative, and further states, "One sure way to circumvent these inherent advantages is by reducing the in-country footprint of U.S. Forces."¹⁵ He espouses over the horizon peace operations as a doctrinal concept. A concerted effort by recently experienced officers and senior enlisted personnel can provide similar new and effective doctrine.

In conclusion, the Regional Commanders are currently responsible for the planning, training and execution of operations, across the spectrum of conflict. Are they really confident that they can continue to do justice to both war and MOOTW. This author thinks not and advocates study and change to our current direction. CINCs have the power to make changes to training, structure, roles and

functions and doctrine to ensure proper focus. The services, even if they realize changes are necessary to provide more focus on MOOTW or war taskings will not if it means giving up budget dollars.

Is it time to be more specialized in order to ensure nothing suffers at either end of the spectrum of conflict? Yes it is, and the Regional CINCs are the personalities that must act.

ENDNOTES

1. The White House, A National Security Strategy Of Engagement and Enlargement (Washington: 1994), p. 6.

2. The Pentagon, National Military Strategy of the United States of America (Washington: 1995), p. ii.

3. Interviews of five officers were conducted. These officers are all former battalion level commanders and/or battalion thru division level operations officers. They wished to remain anonymous.

4. The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Report on the Roles, Missions, and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States, (Washington: 1993), p. viii.

5. During Exercise Alpine Warrior 94, it became evidently clear that things not related directly to the war were neglected and ignored. The author, ashamedly, was directly involved with this neglect.

6. John R. Allen, "Humanity on Humanitarian Operations: How Much Violence is Enough?," Marine Corps Gazette, February 1995, p. 14.

7. Thomas C. Linn, "Debating Marine Corps Roles and Missions," Marine Corps Gazette, March 1995, p. 88.

8. Carl E. Mundy, "The U.S. Marines Are Old Hands at Humanitarian Intervention," Armed Forces Journal International, February 1993, p. 42.

9. The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, p. xii.

10. Jeffrey R. Barnett, "Nonstate War," Marine Corps Gazette, May 1994, p. 89.

11. The author served for three years with a Reserve Infantry Regiment. On many occasions the problems of finding volunteers and sustaining personnel levels beyond the normal two week Annual Training period is a challenge. Changes to current laws and statutes are required to solve the problems with using reserves outside the realm of a National Emergency, i.e., a SecDef 25K call-up authority.

12. Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State (Cambridge, Ma: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 17.

13. Michael C. Mitchell, "Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance," Marine Corps Gazette, February 1995, p. 32.

14. Charles P. Neimeyer, "Gone to Fight Indians...Be Back When It's Over-Peace Operations Reconsidered," Marine Corps Gazette, January 1994, p. 31.

15. Ibid.

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